

TANF SERVICES FUNDED IN WISCONSIN

WISCONSIN WORKS (W-2) CASH BENEFITS

Program Description:

Wisconsin Works (W-2) replaced Aid to Families with Dependent Children (AFDC) in September 1997. W-2 is based on work participation and personal responsibility. Under W-2, there is no entitlement to assistance, but there is a place for everyone who is willing to work to their ability. The program is available to all parents with minor children, low assets and low income. Each W-2 eligible participant meets with a Financial and Employment Planner (FEP), who helps the person develop a self-sufficiency plan and determine their place on the W-2 employment ladder. The ladder consists of four levels of employment and training options, in order of preference:

- **Unsubsidized Employment:** Individuals entering W-2 are first guided to the best available immediate job opportunity. The W-2 agency supports the participant's efforts to secure employment. Persons in unsubsidized employment may also be eligible for an earned income credit, food stamps, Medicaid, child care, and Job Access Loans.
- **Trial Jobs (subsidized employment):** For individuals who are unable to locate unsubsidized work, but have a willing attitude, the FEP explores options for subsidized employment. These trial job contracts are a way to help the employer cover the cost of training a person who might need extra support in the first three to six months. Trial jobs are expected to result in permanent positions. Participants receive at least minimum wage for every hour of work. The employee may be eligible for an Earned Income Credit, food stamps, Medicaid, child care, and Job Access Loans.
- **Community Service Jobs (CSJs):** For those who need to practice the work habits and skills necessary to be hired by a regular employer, CSJs are developed in the community. CSJ participants receive a monthly grant of \$673 for up to 30 hours per week in work training activities and up to 10 hours a week in education or training, and may be eligible for food stamps, Medicaid, child care and job access loans.
- **W-2 Transition (W-2 T):** Transition is reserved for those who, because of severe barriers, are unable to perform independent, self-sustaining work. W-2 T participants receive a monthly grant of \$628 for up to 28 hours per week participating in work training or other developmental activities up to their ability and up to 12 hours per week in education or training. W-2 T participants may be eligible for food stamps, Medicaid, child care, and Job Access Loans.

Wisconsin uses TANF funds to provide the benefits for participants in Trial Jobs, Community Service Jobs and W-2 Transitions.

Client Group Served:

W-2 participants and their families most directly benefit.

Critical Indicators:

- W-2 benefits in most cases are more generous than benefits provided under the AFDC program. A family of three on AFDC received \$517 per month. That same family would be eligible for at least \$628 per month under W-2.
- Wisconsin is one of only 5 states nationwide that increased the cash benefits available to families after PRWORA was passed.

TOTAL TANF FUNDING: \$49,300,000